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THE ART OF LIFE

BOOKS BY HAVELOCK ELLIS

THE DANCE OF LIFE

IMPRESSIONS AND COMMENTS
(Three Series)

THE TASK OF SOCIAL HYGIENE

THE SOUL OF SPAIN

AFFIRMATIONS

THE WORLD OF DREAMS

THE NEW SPIRIT

THE ART OF LIFE

FROM THE WORKS OF
HAVELOCK ELLIS

SELECTED AND ARRANGED BY
MRS. S. HERBERT

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NOTE

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LOVE

THE ART OF LIFE

* * *

LOVE

I

THE chief and central function of life — the omnipresent process of sex, ever wonderful, ever lovely, as it is woven into the whole texture of our man's or woman's body — is the pattern of all the process of our life. At whatever point touched, the reverberation, multiplexly charged with uses, meanings, and emotional associations of infinite charm, to the sensitive individual more or less conscious, spreads throughout the entire organism. We can no longer intrude our crude distinctions of high and low. We cannot now step in and say that this link in the chain is eternally ugly and that is eternally beautiful. For irrational dis-

gust, the varying outcome of individual idiosyncrasy, there is doubtless still room; it is incalculable, and cannot be reached. But that rational disgust which was once held to be common property has received from science its death-blow. In the growth of the sense of purity, which Whitman, not alone, has annunciated, lies one of our chief hopes for morals, as well as for art.

II

Flowers are of all things most completely and profusely the obvious efflorescence of loveliness in the whole physical world. Gods are of all things the most marvellous efflorescence of the human psychic world. These two Lovelinesses, the Loveliness of Sex and the Loveliness of Creation, bring the whole universe to two polar points, which yet are in the closest degree resemblant and allied. . . . And perhaps it is because

men and women are in function flowers and in image gods that they are so fascinating, even enwrapped in the rags, physical and metaphysical, which sometimes serve but to express the Flower-God beneath.

III

In an age when savagery has passed and civilization has not arrived, it is only by stealth, at rare moments, that the human form may emerge from the prison-house of its garments, it is only from afar that the radiance of its beauty — if beauty is still left to it — may faintly flash before us.

Among pseudo-Christian barbarians, as Heine described them, the Olympian deities still wander homelessly, scarce emerging from beneath obscure disguises, and half ashamed of their own divinity.

IV

THE vision of the essential and eternal human form, the nearest thing to us in all the world, with its vigour and its beauty and its grace, is one of the prime tonics of life. . . . It is more than all the beautiful and stimulating things of the world, than flowers or stars or the sea.

V

THERE is only one time in life for milk, only one time for youth; we cannot postpone life or retrace its milestones, and what is once lost is lost for ever. The cold waters of self-restraint and self-denial, as we first put our young feet in them, send a tonic shiver along the nerves, and we go on and on. But suddenly we find that the water has risen to our breasts, to our chins, that it is too late, too late, that we shall never again move and breathe freely in the open air and sunshine. That is the fate that over-

takes the young ascetic ideal. Unhappier yet are those who snatch the cup of life so hastily in youth and fill it with such muddy waters that the dregs cling to their lips for ever, spoiling the taste of the most exquisite things. To live remains an art which every one must learn, and which no one can teach.

VI

You have never seen the world if you have not realized that an element of asceticism lies at the foundation of life. You may expel it with the fork of reason or of self-enjoyment, but being part of Nature herself it must ever return. All the art of living lies in a fine mingling of letting go and holding in. The man who makes the one or the other his exclusive aim in life will die before he has ever begun to live. The man who has carried one part of the process to excess before turning to the other will indeed learn what life

is, and may leave behind him the memory of a pattern saint. But he alone is the wise master of living who from first to last has held the double ideal in true honour. In these, as in other matters, we cannot know the spiritual facts unless we realize the physical facts of life. All life is a building up and a breaking down, a taking in and a giving out, a perpetually anabolic and katabolic rhythm. To live rightly we must imitate both the luxury of Nature and her austerity.

VII

PROPERLY understood, asceticism is a discipline, a training, which has reference to an end not itself. If it is compulsorily perpetual, whether at the dictates of a religious dogma, or as a mere fetish, it is no longer on a natural basis, and it is no longer moral, for the restraint of a man who has spent his whole life in prison is of no value for life. If it is to be natural,

and to be moral asceticism must have an end outside itself, it must subserve the ends of vital activity, which cannot be subserved by a person who is engaged in a perpetual struggle with his own natural instincts. A man may, indeed, as a matter of taste or preference, live his whole life in sexual abstinence, freely and easily, but in that case he is not an ascetic, and his abstinence is neither a subject for applause nor for criticism.

VIII

'To the pure all things are pure.' It may be the truth. But I sometimes wish Saint Paul had stated that hazardous truth in another form and declared that to the impure all things are impure.

The sea receives much filth into its broad bosom, and beneath the vital action of sun and wind and a pervading antiseptic salinity, it is all transmuted into use and beauty and the invigorating

breath of ozone. But some narrow and enclosed minds are not so much like the sea as like the sewer. I object to the sewer pretending to a virtue which is the prerogative of those minds only which are like the sea.

IX

People may be divided into two classes: the people who like to drink the dregs of their cup, and the people whose instinctive preference it is to leave the dregs. This is a distinction which cuts deep into the moral life. The people of the first class are usually counted the more interesting, and necessarily they are able to extract more out of life, more pain, and possibly more pleasure, though one may question the quality of the extract.

X

The utmost freedom, the utmost restraint, we need them both. They are

two aspects of the same thing. We cannot have freedom in any triumphant degree unless we have restraint. The main point is, that we should not fossilize either our freedoms or our restraints. Every individual needs — harmoniously with the needs of other individuals — the freedoms and restraints his own nature demands. Every age needs new freedoms and new restraints. In the making of New Freedoms and New Restraints lies the rhythm of Life.

XI

We can only attain a fine temperance through a fine freedom, even a fine excess. The women who think that they must at all costs repress themselves, and the men who — usually with the help of certain private 'accommodements' — consider repression as the proper ideal, have missed the true safeguards against licence, and flounder for ever in a turbid

sea, at war with themselves, at war with nature. The saints knew better. By a process of spiritual Pasteurism, a natural and spontaneous process, they guaranteed their eternal peace. All the real saints, so far as we know them, had many phases, such of them as were saints from their mothers' wombs possessing a significance which for human beings generally is minimal. The real saints in all ages have forgotten so many beautiful things, storing so many wonderful experiences in their past. . . . If you would be a saint you must begin by being something other than a saint.

XII

The attraction of sex, according to a superstition which reaches far back into antiquity, is a baleful comet pointing to destruction, rather than a mighty star to which we may harness our chariot. It may certainly be either, and which it is

likely to become depends largely on our knowledge and our power of self-guidance.

XIII

Chastity in a healthily developed person can be beautifully exercised only in the actual erotic life; in part it is the natural instinct of dignity and temperance; in part it is the art of touching the things of sex with hands that remember their aptness for all the fine ends of life. Upon the doorway of entrance to the inmost sanctuary of love there is thus the same inscription as on the doorway to the Epidaurian Sanctuary of Æsculapius: 'None but the pure shall enter here.'

XIV

We cannot accept an ideal of chastity unless we ruthlessly cast aside all the unnatural and empty forms of chastity. If chastity is merely a fatiguing effort to

emulate in the sexual sphere the exploits of professional fasting men, an effort using up all the energies of the organism and resulting in no achievement greater than the abstinence it involves, then it is surely an unworthy ideal. If it is a feeble submission to an external conventional law which there is no courage to break, then it is not an ideal at all. If it is a rule of morality imposed by one sex on the opposite sex, then it is an injustice and provocative of revolt. If it is an abstinence from the usual forms of sexuality, replaced by more abnormal or secret forms, then it is simply an unreality based on misconception. And if it is merely an external acceptance of convention without any further acceptance even in act, then it is a contemptible farce.

XV

What we continue to insist on describing technically as a weakness or a vice is

justified by its joy-bestowing and life-stimulating properties. We shall have to say, as Goethe said, with his usual assurance of the Divine Process, that God had given us our naughtinesses to help us. He might have added that when they fail to help us it is best to give them back with as little delay as possible.

XVI

THE old orgies — the Saturnalian festival at Christmas and the Midsummer festival on Saint John's Day — bear witness that the ancients in their wisdom recognized that the bonds of the actual daily moral life must sometimes be relaxed lest they break from over-tension. We have lost the orgy, but in its place we have art. Our respectable matrons no longer send out their daughters with torches at midnight into the woods and among the hills, where dancing and wine and blood may lash into their flesh the

knowledge of the mysteries of life, but they take them to 'Tristan,' and are fortunately unable to see into those carefully brought-up young souls on such occasions. The moralizing force of art lies, not in its capacity to present a timid imitation of our experiences, but in its power to go beyond our experience, satisfying and harmonizing the unfulfilled activities of our nature.

XVII

WITHOUT an element of the obscene there can be no true and deep æsthetic or moral conception of life. But the obscene must be kept in its place, it must be controlled, it must be held in due relation to the whole. Only those who have been well trained in watching the stage of life can dare successfully to complete the picture by revealing life behind the scene. . . . It is only the great men who are truly obscene. It is that touch which stamps

their genius. It gives profundity and truth to their vision of life. If they had not dared to be obscene they could never have dared to be great. Their vision of the world would have remained fatally marred.

XVIII

I DREAM of a world in which the spirits of women are flames stronger than fire, a world in which modesty has become courage and yet remains modesty, a world in which women are as unlike men as ever they were in the world I sought to destroy, a world in which women shine with a loveliness of self-revelation as enchanting as ever the old legends told, and yet a world which would immeasurably transcend the old world in the self-sacrificing passion of human service. I have dreamed of that world ever since I began to dream at all.

XIX

We may say that the sexual energy of the organism is a mighty force, automatically generated throughout life. Under healthy conditions that force is transmuted in more or less degree, but never entirely, into forms that further the development of the individual and the general ends of life. These transformations are to some extent automatic, to some extent within the control of personal guidance. But there are limits to such guidance, for the primitive human personality can never be altogether rendered an artificial creature of civilization. When these limits are reached the transmutation of sexual energy may become useless or even dangerous, and we fail to attain the exquisite flower of purity.

XX

The wise educator may see to it that boys and girls are brought up in a natu-

ral and wholesome familiarity with each other, but a certain terror and beauty must always attach to the spectacle of the body, a mixed attraction and repulsion. Because it has this force it naturally calls out the virtue of those who take part in the spectacle, and makes impossible any soft compliance to emotion. Even if we admit that the spectacle of nakedness is a challenge to passion it is still a challenge that calls out the ennobling qualities of self-control. It is but a poor sort of virtue that lies in fleeing into the desert from things that we fear may have in them a temptation. We have to learn that it is even worse to attempt to create a desert around us in the midst of civilization. We cannot dispense with passions if we would; reason, as Holbach said, is the art of choosing the right passions, and education the art of sowing and cultivating them in human hearts. The spectacle of nakedness has its moral value in teaching us to learn to enjoy

what we do not possess, a lesson which is an essential part of the training for any kind of fine social life. The child has to learn to look at flowers and not pluck them; the man has to learn to look at a woman's beauty and not desire to possess it. The joyous conquest over that 'erotic kleptomania,' as Ellen Key has well said, reveals the blossoming of a fine civilization. We fancy the conquest is difficult, even impossibly difficult. But it is not so. This impulse, like other human impulses, tends under natural conditions to develop temperately and wholesomely. We artificially press a stupid and brutal hand on it, and it is driven into the two unnatural extremes of repression and licence, one extreme as foul as the other.

XXI

THE delicate adjustment of the needs of each sex to the needs of the other sex to

the end of what Chaucer calls fine loving, the adjustment of the needs of both sexes to the larger ends of fine living, may well furnish a perpetual moral discipline which extends its fortifying influence to men and women alike.

XXII

Lovers in their play — when they have been liberated from the traditions which bound them to the trivial or to the gross conception of play in love — are thus moving amongst the highest human activities, alike of the body and of the soul. They are passing to each other the sacramental chalice of that wine which imparts the deepest joy that men and women can know. They are subtly weaving the invisible cords that bind husband and wife together more truly and more firmly than the priest of any church. And if in the end — as may or may not be — they attain the climax of

free and complete union, then their human play has become one with that divine play of creation in which old poets fabled that, out of the dust of the ground and in his own image, some God of Chaos once created Man.

XXIII

THE great evil of monogamy, and its most seriously weak point, is its tendency to self-concentration at the expense of the outer world. The devil always comes to a man in the shape of his wife and children, said Hinton. The family is a great social influence in so far as it is the best instrument for creating children who will make the future citizens; but in a certain sense the family is an anti-social influence, for it tends to absorb unduly the energy that is needed for the invigoration of society. It is possible, indeed, that that fact led to the modification of the monogamic system in early develop-

ing periods of human history, when social expansion and cohesion were the primary necessities. The family too often tends to resemble, as someone has said, the secluded collection of grubs sometimes revealed in their narrow home when we casually raise a flat stone in our gardens. Great as are the problems of love, and great as should be our attention to them, it must always be remembered that love is not a little circle that is complete in itself. It is the nature of love to irradiate. Just as family life exists mainly for the social end of breeding the future race, so family love has its social ends in the extension of sympathy and affection to those outside it, and even in ends that go beyond love altogether.

XXIV

THERE is something pathetic in the spectacle of those among us who are still only able to recognize the animal end of marriage, and who point to the example of

the lower animals — among whom the biological conditions are entirely different — as worthy of our imitation. It has taken God — or Nature, if we will — unknown millions of years of painful struggle to evolve Man, and to raise the human species above that helpless bondage to reproduction which marks the lower animals. But on these people it has all been wasted. They are at the animal stage still. They have yet to learn the A B C of love.

XXV

For if we truly loved, we have done our best, we have been moved by the strongest motive in all the world to do our best, and if all our failures and weaknesses and perversities have not been more than balanced by the strong achievements of our love, then we must be from the outset but poor creatures so to fail in the most joyous task in the whole world, creatures too poor for sorrow, even their own.

ART

ART

XXVI

NATURE comes to us through an atmosphere which is the emanation of supreme artists who once thrilled us.

XXVII

YET there are some to whom it still seems that, beyond mechanical skill, the cadences of the artist's speech are the cadences of his heart, and the footfalls of his rhythm the footfalls of his spirit, in a great adventure across the universe.

XXVIII

To see the World as Beauty is the whole End of Living. I cannot say it is the aim of living. Because the greatest ends are never the result of aiming; they are infinite, and our aims can only be finite. . . .

Beauty is the end of living, not Truth.

XXIX

The more finely and adequately we adjust ourselves to the actual conditions of our life the larger, no doubt, the unused and unsatisfied region within us. But it is just here that art comes in. Art largely counts for its effects on playing on these unused fibres of our organism, and by so doing it serves to bring them into a state of harmonious satisfaction — moralizes them, if you will.

XXX

Art, as no mere passive hyperæsthesia to external impressions, or exclusive absorption in a single sense, but as a many-sided and active delight in the wholeness of things, is the great restorer of health and rest to the energies distracted by our turbulent modern movements. Thus understood, it has the firmest of scientific foundations; it is but the reasonable satisfaction of the instinctive cravings of the

organism, cravings that are not the less real for being often unconscious. Its satisfaction means the presence of joy in our daily life, and joy is the prime tonic of life. It is the gratification of the art-instinct that makes the wholesome stimulation of labour joyous; it is in the gratification of the art-instinct that repose becomes joyous.

XXXI

It is by limitation — the limitation which all art involves — that Nature becomes diverse, fantastic, seemingly artificial. . . . Let us therefore accept with joy the diversity of the world, and with equal joy its inability to accept its own diversity.

XXXII

There seems to be no more pronounced mark of the decadence of a people and its literature than a servile and rigid sub-

serviency to rule. It can only make for ossification, for anchylosis, for petrification, all the milestones on the road of death. In every age of democratic plebeianism, when each man thinks he is as good a writer as the others, and takes his laws from the others, having no laws of his own nature, it is down this steep path that men, in a flock, inevitably run.

XXXIII

The path of beauty is not soft and smooth, but full of harshness and asperity. It is a rose that grows only on a bush covered with thorns. As of goodness and of truth, men talk too lightly of Beauty. Only to the bravest and skilfullest is it given to break through the briers of her palace and kiss at last her enchanted lips.

XXXIV

There is no transcendent objective truth, each one of us is an artist creating

his own truth from the phenomena presented to him; but if in that creation he allows any alien emotional or practical considerations to influence him, he is a bad artist and his work is wrought for destruction.

XXXV

ART is the moulding force of every culture that Man during his long course has at any time or place produced. It is the reality of what we imperfectly term 'mortality.' It is all human creation.

Yet creation, in the active visible constructive sense, is not the whole of Man. It is not even the whole of what Man has been accustomed to call God. When, by what is now termed a process of Narcissism, Man created God in his own image, as we may instructively observe in the first chapter of the Hebrew book of Genesis, he assigned to him six parts of active creational work, one seventh part

of passive contemplation of that work. That one part — and an immensely important part — has not come under our consideration. In other words we have been looking at Man the artist, not at Man the æsthetician.

XXXVI

In its chief but rarer aspects literature is the medium of art, and as such can raise no ethical problems. Whatever morality or immorality art may hold is quiescent, or lifted into an atmosphere of radiant immortality where questioning is irrelevant. Of the literature that is all art we need not even speak, unless by chance we too approach it as artists, trying to capture it by imaginative insight. In literature, as elsewhere, art should only be approached as we would approach Paradise, for the sake of its joy.

XXXVII

We have to recognize that decadence is an æsthetic and not a moral conception. The power of words is great, but they need not befool us. The classic herring should suggest no moral superiority over the decadent bloater. We are not called upon to air our moral indignation over the bass end of the musical clef. All confusion of intellectual substances is foolish, and one may well sympathize with that fervid unknown metaphysician to whom we owe the Athanasian creed when he went so far as to assert that it is damnable. It is not least so in the weak-headed decadent who falls into the moralist's snare and complacently admits his own exceeding wickedness. We may well reserve our finest admiration for the classic in art, for therein are included the largest and most imposing works of human skill; but our admiration is of little worth if it is founded on incapacity to appreciate

the decadent. Each has its virtues, each is equally right and necessary. One ignorant of plants might well say, on gazing at a seed-capsule with its seeds disposed in harmonious rows, that there was the eternally natural and wholesome order of things, and on seeing the same capsule wither and cast abroad its seeds to germinate at random in the earth, that here was an unwholesome and deplorable period of decay. But he would know little of the transmutations of life. And we have to recognize that those persons who bring the same crude notions into the field of art know as little of the life of the spirit.

XXXVIII

HUYSMANS very exquisitely represents one aspect of the complex modern soul, that aspect which shrinks from the grosser forces of Nature, from the bare simplicity of the naked sky or the naked

body, 'the incessant deluge of human foolishness,' the eternal oppression of the commonplace, to find a sedative for its exasperated nerves in the contemplation of esoteric beauty and the difficult search for the mystic peace which passes all understanding. 'Needs must I rejoice beyond the age,' runs the motto from the old Flemish mystic Ruysbroeck set on the front of 'A Rebours,' 'though the world has horror of my joy and its grossness cannot understand what I would say.' Such is decadence; such, indeed, is religion, in the wide and true sense of the word. Christianity itself, as we know it in the western church, sprang from the baptism of young barbarism into Latin decadence. Pagan art and its clear serenity, science, rationalism, the bright, rough vigour of the sun and the sea, the adorable mystery of common life and commonplace human love are left to make up the spirit that in any age we call 'classic.'

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Thus what we call classic corresponds on the spiritual side to the love of natural things, and what we call decadent to the research for the things which seem to lie beyond Nature.

XXXIX

Just as we need athletics to expand and harmonize the coarser unused energies of the organism, so we need art and literature to expand and harmonize its finer energies, emotion being, as it may not be superfluous to point out, itself largely a muscular process, motion in a more or less arrested form, so that there is here more than a mere analogy. Art from this point of view is the athletics of the emotions.

XL

Thus we see the reason why all the people who come forward to define art — each

with his own little measuring-rod quite different from everybody else's — inevitably make themselves ridiculous. It is true they are all of them right. That is just why they are ridiculous: each has mistaken the one drop of water he has measured for the whole ocean. Art cannot be defined because it is infinite. It is no accident that poetry, which has so often seemed the typical art, means a *making*. The artist is a maker. Art is merely a name we are pleased to give to what can only be the whole stream of action which — in order to impart to it selection and an unconscious, or even conscious, aim — is poured through the nervous circuit of a human animal or some other animal having a more or less similar nervous organization. For a cat is an artist as well as a man, and some would say more than a man, while a bee is not only an obvious artist, but perhaps even the typical natural and unconscious artist. There is no defining art; there is

only the attempt to distinguish between good art and bad art.

XLI

It is the business of the Shaman, as on the mystical side we may conveniently term the medicine-man, to place himself under the conditions — and even in primitive life those conditions are varied and subtle — which bring his will into harmony with the essence of the world, so that he grows one with that essence, that its will becomes his will, and, reversely, that, in a sense, his will becomes its. Herewith, in this unity with the spirit of the world, the possibility of magic and the power to control the operation of Nature are introduced into human thought, with its core of reality and its endless trail of absurdity, persisting even into advanced civilization.

But this harmony with the essence of the universe, this control of Nature

through oneness with Nature, is not only at the heart of religion; it is also at the heart of science. It is only by the possession of an acquired or inborn temperament attuned to the temperament of Nature that a Faraday and an Edison, that any scientific discoverer or inventor, can achieve his results. And the primitive medicine-man, who on the religious side has attained harmony of the Self with the Not-Self, and by obeying learnt to command, cannot fail on the scientific side also, under the special conditions of his isolated life, to acquire an insight into natural methods, a practical power over human activities and over the treatment of disease, such as on the imaginative and emotional side he already possesses. If we are able to see this essential and double attitude of the Shaman or medicine-man, if we are able to eliminate all the extraneous absurdities and the extravagancies which conceal the real nature of his function in the primitive

world, the problem of science and mysticism, and their relationship to each other, ceases to have difficulties for us.

XLII

It may often seem that in these attempts to explain the artist the man of science is passed over or left in the background, and that is true. But art and science, as we now know, have the same roots. The supreme men of science are recognizably artists, and the earliest forms of art, which are very early indeed — Sir Arthur Evans has suggested that men may have drawn before they talked — were doubtless associated with magic, which was primitive man's science, or, at all events, his nearest approximation to science. The connection of the scientific instinct with the sexual instinct is not, indeed, a merely recent insight. Many years ago it was clearly stated by a famous Dutch author. 'Nature, who must act wisely at

the risk of annihilation,' wrote Multatuli at the conclusion of his short story, 'The Adventures of Little Walter,' 'has herein acted wisely by turning all her powers in one direction. Moralists and psychologists have long since recognized, without inquiring into the causes, that curiosity is one of the main elements of love. Yet they were only thinking of sexual love, and by raising the two related termini in corresponding wise on to a higher plane I believe that the noble thirst for knowledge springs from the same soil in which noble love grows. To press through, to reveal, to possess, to direct, and to ennoble, that is the task and the longing, alike of the lover and the natural discoverer. So that every Ross or Franklin is a Werther of the Pole, and whoever is in love is a Mungo Park of the spirit.'

XLIII

THE mathematician is engaged in a work of creation which resembles music in its

orderliness, and is yet reproducing on another plane the order of the universe, and so becoming as it were a music of the spheres. It is not surprising that the greatest mathematicians have again and again appealed to the arts in order to find some analogy to their own work. They have indeed found it in the most various arts — in poetry, in painting, in sculpture, although it would certainly seem that it is in music, the most abstract of the arts, the art of number and of time, that we find the closest analogy. 'The mathematician's best work is art,' said Mittag-Leffler, 'a high and perfect art, as daring as the most secret dreams of imagination, clear and limpid. Mathematical genius and artistic genius touch each other.' And Sylvester wrote in his 'Theory of Reciprocants': 'Does it not seem as if Algebra had attained to the dignity of a fine art, in which the workman has a free hand to develop his conceptions, as in a musical theme or a sub-

ject for painting? It has reached a point in which every properly-developed algebraical composition, like a skilful landscape, is expected to suggest the notion of an infinite distance lying beyond the limits of the canvas.' 'Mathematics, rightly viewed,' says Bertrand Russell again, 'possesses not only truth, but supreme beauty — a beauty cold and austere, like that of sculpture. The true spirit of delight, the exaltation, the sense of being more than man, which is the touchstone of the highest excellence, is to be found in mathematics as surely as in poetry.'

The mathematician has reached the highest rung on the ladder of human thought. But it is the same ladder which we have all of us been always ascending alike from the infancy of the individual and the infancy of the race. Molière's Jourdain had been speaking prose for more than forty years without knowing it. Mankind has been thinking poetry

throughout its long career and remained equally ignorant.

XLIV

IMAGINATION is a constitutive part of all thinking. We may make distinctions between practical scientific thinking and disinterested æsthetic thinking. Yet all thinking is finally a comparison. Scientific fictions are parallel with æsthetic fictions. The poet is the type of all thinkers; there is no sharp boundary between the region of poetry and the region of science. Both alike are not ends in themselves but means to higher ends.

XLV

TECHNIQUE is the art of so dealing with matter — whether clay or pigment or sounds or words — that it ceases to affect us in the same way as the stuff it is wrought out of originally affects us, and

becomes a Transparent Symbol of a Spiritual Reality. Something that was always familiar and commonplace is suddenly transformed into something that until that moment eye had never seen or ear heard, and that yet seems the revelation of our hearts' secret.

. . . Through technique the stuff of the artist's work becomes the stuff of his own soul moulded into shapes that were never before known. In that act Dust is transubstantiated into God. The Garment of the Infinite is lifted, and the aching human heart is pressed for one brief moment against the breast of the Ineffable Mystery.

XLVI

To see truly, according to the fine saying of Renan, is to see dimly. If art is expression, mere clarity is nothing. The extreme clarity of an artist may be due not to his marvellous power of illuminating

the abysses of his soul, but merely to the fact that there are no abysses to illuminate. It is at best but that core of Nothingness which needs to be enclosed in order to make either Beauty or Depth. The maximum of Clarity must be consistent with the maximum of Beauty. The impression we receive on first entering the presence of any supreme work of art is obscurity. But it is an obscurity like that of a Catalonian Cathedral which slowly grows luminous as one gazes, until the solid structure beneath is revealed. The veil of its Depth grows first transparent on the form of Art before our eyes, and then the veil of its Beauty, and at last there is only its Clarity. So it comes before us like the Eastern dancer who slowly unwinds the shimmering veil that floats around her as she dances, and for one flashing supreme moment of the dance bears no veil at all. But without the veil there would be no dance.

XLVII

STYLE in the full sense is more than the deliberate and designed creation, more even than the unconscious and involuntary creation, of the individual man who therein expresses himself. The self that he thus expresses is a bundle of inherited tendencies that came the man himself can never entirely know whence. It is by the instinctive stress of a highly sensitive or slightly abnormal constitution that he is impelled to distil these tendencies into the alien magic of words. The stylum wherewith he strives to write himself on the yet blank pages of the world may have the obstinate vigour of the metal rod or the wild and quavering waywardness of an insect's wing, but behind it lie forces that extend into infinity. It moves us because it is itself moved by pulses which in varying measure we also have inherited, and because its primary source is in the heart of a cosmos from which we ourselves spring.

XLVIII

The dancer in prose as well as in verse — philosopher or whatever he may be — must reveal all his limbs through the garment he wears; yet the garment must have its own proper beauty, and there is a failure of art, a failure of revelation, if it possesses no beauty. Style, indeed, is not really a mere invisible, transparent medium, it is not really a garment, but, as Gourmont said, the very thought itself. It is the miraculous transubstantiation of a spiritual body, given to us in the only form in which we may receive and absorb that body, and unless its clarity is balanced by its beauty it is not adequate to sustain that most high function.

XLIX

We always move on two feet, as Élie Faure remarks in his 'L'Arbre d'Éden,' the two poles of knowledge and of desire, the one a matter of deliberate acquire-

ment and the other of profound instinct; and all our movements are a perpetual leap from one to the other, seeking a centre of gravity we never attain. So the achievement of style in writing, as in all human intercourse, is something more than an infinite capacity for taking pains. It is also defined — and sometimes I think, supremely well defined — as 'grace seasoned with salt.' Beyond all that can be achieved by knowledge and effort, there must be the spontaneous grace that springs up like a fountain from the depth of a beautifully harmonious nature, and there must be also the quality which the Spaniards call 'sal,' and so rightly admire in the speech of the women of the people of their own land, the salt quality which gives savour and point and antiseptic virtue.

L

THE great writers, though they are always themselves, attain the perfect

music of their style under the stress of a stimulus adequate to arouse it. Their music is the audible translation of emotion and only arises when the waves of emotion are stirred. It is not, properly speaking, a voluntary effect. We can but say that the winds of the spirit are breathed upon the surface of style, and they lift it into rhythmic movement. And for each writer these waves have their own special rate of vibration, their peculiar shape and interval. The rich deep slow tones of Bacon have nothing in common with the haunting, long-drawn melody, faint and tremulous, of Newman; the high metallic falsetto ring of De Quincey's rhetoric is far away from the pensive low-toned music of Pater.

LI

Religion or the desire for the salvation of our souls, 'Art' or the desire for beautification, Science or the search for the

reasons for things — these conations of the mind, which are really three aspects of the same profound impulse, have been allowed to furrow each in its own narrow separate channel, in alienation from the others, and so they have all been impeded in their greater function of fertilizing life.

LII

Science, mere concordance with the latest doctrine of the moment, is nothing to the artist except in so far as it serves his ends. It is just as likely to be a hindrance as a help, and Tennyson, however true an artist, profited nothing by dragging into his verse a few scraps of the latest astronomy. Art is in its sphere as supreme over fact as Science in its sphere is supreme over fiction. The artist may play either fast or loose with Science, and the finest artist will sometimes play loose.

LIII

It is by art and religion that men have always sought rest. Art is a world of man's own making, in which he finds harmonious development, a development that satisfies because framed to the measuring rod of his most delicate senses. Religion is the anodyne cup — indeed of our own blood — at which we slake our thirst when our hearts are torn by personal misery, or weary and distracted by life's heat and restless hurry. At times, the great motor instincts of our nature, impelling us by a force that we cannot measure or control, cause us to break up our dainty house of art, or to dash down bravely the cup of healing. But we shall always return to them again; they, too, represent an instinct at the root of our being. In the recognition of this harmony lies the secret of wise living.

LIV

THE mother who seeks to soothe her crying child preaches him no sermon. She holds up some bright object and it fixes his attention. So it is the artist acts: he makes us see. He brings the world before us, not on the plane of covetousness and fears and commandments, but on the plane of representation; the world becomes a spectacle. Instead of imitating those philosophers who with analyses and syntheses worry over the goal of life, and the justification of the world, and the meaning of the strange and painful phenomenon called Existence, the artist takes up some fragment of that existence, transfigures it, shows it: There! And therewith the spectator is filled with enthusiastic joy, and the transcendent Adventure of Existence is justified. Every great artist, a Dante or a Shakespeare, a Dostoevsky or a Proust, thus furnishes the metaphysical justification of exist-

ence by the vision he presents of the cruelty and the horror of existence. All the pain and madness, even the ugliness and the commonplace of the world, he converts into shining jewels. By revealing the spectacular character of reality he restores the serenity of its innocence. We see the face of the world as of a lovely woman shining through tears.

LV

In a certain sense, if one thinks, it is the ripeness of Raphael's perfection which falls short of Perfection. In all Perfection that satisfies we demand the possibility of a Beyond which enfolds a further Perfection. It is not the fully blown rose which entrances us, but rather that which in its half-blown loveliness suggests a Perfection which no full-blown rose ever reached. In that the rose is the symbol of all vitally beautiful things. Raphael is the full-blown rose; the only

Beyond is Dissolution and the straggling of faded petals.

LVI

LEONARDO comes before us, indeed, in the end as a figure for awe rather than for love. Yet, as the noblest type of the Overman we faintly try to conceive, Leonardo is the foe not of man but of the enemies of man. The great secrets that with clear vision his stern grip tore from Nature, the new instruments of power that his energy wrought, they were all for the use and delight of mankind. So Leonardo is the everlasting embodiment of that brooding human spirit whose task never dies. Still to-day it stands at the mouth of the gloomy cavern of Nature, even of Human Nature, with bent back and shaded eyes, seeking intently to penetrate the gloom beyond, with the fear of that threatening darkness, with the desire of what redeeming miracle it yet perchance may hold.

LVII

If it should so be that, as we learn to see him truly, the figure of the real Socrates must diminish in magnitude, then — and that is the point which concerns us here — the glory of the artist who made him what he has become for us is immensely enhanced. No longer the merely apt and brilliant disciple of a great master, he becomes himself master and lord, the radiant creator of the chief figure in European philosophy, the most marvellous artist the world has ever known. So that when we look back at the spiritual history of Europe it may become possible to say that its two supreme figures, the Martyr of Philosophy and the Martyr of Religion, were both — however real the two human persons out of which they were formed — the work of man's imagination. For there, on the one hand, we see the most accomplished of European thinkers, and on the other a little

band of barbarians, awkwardly using just the same Greek language but working with an unconscious skill which even transcends all that conscious skill could have achieved, yet both bearing immortal witness to the truth that the human soul only lives truly in art and can only be ruled through art. So it is that in art lies the solution of the conflicts of philosophy. There we see Realism, or the discovery of things, one with Idealism, or the creation of things. Art is the embodied harmony of their conflict. That could not be more exquisitely symbolized than by these two supreme figures in the spiritual life of Europe, the Platonic Socrates and the Gospel Jesus, both alike presented to us, it is so significant to observe, as masters of irony.

LVIII

DARWIN was one of those elect persons in whose subconscious, if not in their con-

scious, nature is implanted the realization that 'science *is* poetry,' and in a field altogether remote from the poetry and art of convention he was alike poet and artist.

LIX

Human Society, as much that of the savage as of the civilized, seems, in practice, if not in theory, impossible without ritual, however we may have simplified it, or conventionalized it, from its primitively more elaborate and sacredly significant forms. The ancient Chinese, who had so profound a feeling for the essential things of life, based morals on ceremony and music. It is impossible to construct even Utopia without ritual, however novel a ritual it may be, and even Thelema was an abbey.

LX

The music of César Franck always brings before me a man who is seeking peace

with himself and consolation with God, at a height, above the crowd, in isolation, as it were in the uppermost turret of a church tower. It recalls the memory of the unforgettable evening when Denyn played on the carillon at Malines, and from the canal side I looked up at the little red casement high in the huge Cathedral tower where the great player seemed to be breathing out his soul, in solitude, among the stars. Always when I hear the music of Franck — a Fleming, also, it may well be by no accident — I seem to be in contact with a sensitive and solitary spirit, absorbed in self-communion, weaving the web of its own Heaven and achieving the fulfilment of its own rapture.

In this symphonic poem, 'Les Djinns,' the attitude more tenderly revealed in the 'Variations Symphoniques,' and, above all, the sonata in A Major, is dramatically represented. The solitary dreamer in his tower is surrounded and

assailed by evil spirits, we hear the beating of their great wings as they troop past, but the dreamer is strong and undismayed, and in the end he is left in peace, alone.

LXI

Dancing and building are the two primary and essential arts. The art of dancing stands at the source of all the arts that express themselves first in the human person. The art of building, or architecture, is the beginning of all the arts that lie outside the person; and in the end they unite. Music, acting, poetry proceed in the one mighty stream; sculpture, painting, all the arts of design, in the ōther. There is no primary art outside these two arts, for their origin is far earlier than man himself; and dancing came first.

LXII

Pantomimic dances, with their effort to heighten natural expression and to imitate natural process, bring the dancers into the divine sphere of creation and enable them to assist vicariously in the energy of the gods. The dance thus becomes the presentation of a divine drama, the vital reënactment of a sacred history, in which the worshipper is enabled to play a real part. In this way ritual arises.

LXIII

It is the dance itself, apart from work and apart from the other arts, which, in the opinion of many to-day, has had a decisive influence in socializing, that is to say in moralizing, the human species. Work showed the necessity of harmonious rhythmic coöperation, but the dance developed that rhythmic coöperation and imparted a beneficent impetus to all human activities.

LXIV

DANCING has for ever been in existence as a spontaneous custom, a social discipline. Thus it is, finally, that dancing meets us, not only as love, as religion, as art, but also as morals. All human work, under natural conditions, is a kind of dance.

LXV

ALL great drama owes its vitality to the fact that its spectator is not a mere passive block, but the living inspiration of the whole play. He is indeed himself the very stage on which the drama is enacted. He is more, he is the creator of the play. Here are a group of apparently ordinary persons, undoubtedly actors, furnished with beautiful garments and little more, a few routine stage properties, and, above all, certain formal conventions, without which, as we see in Euripides and all great dramatists, there can be no high

tragedy. Out of these mere nothings and the suggestions they offer, the Spectator, like God, creates a new world and finds it very good. It is his vision, his imagination, the latent possibilities of his soul, that are in play all the time.

Every great dramatic stage the world has seen, in Greece, in Spain, in Elizabethan England, in France, has been ordered on these lines. The great dramatist is not a juggler trying to impose an artifice on his public as a reality; he sets himself in the spectator's heart. Shakespeare was well aware of this principle of the drama; Prospero is the Ideal Spectator of the Theatre.

MORALITY

MORALITY

LXVI

ABSTRACT moral speculations, culminating in rigid maxims, are necessarily sterile and vain. They move in the sphere of reason, and that is the sphere of comprehension, but not of vital action. In this way there arises a moral dualism in civilized man. Objectively he has become like the gods and able to distinguish the ends of life; he has eaten of the fruit of the tree and has knowledge of good and evil. Subjectively he is still not far removed from the savage, oftenest stirred to action by a confused web of emotional motives, among which the interwoven strands of civilized reason are as likely to produce discord or paralysis as to furnish efficient guides, a state of mind first, and perhaps best, set forth in its extreme form by Shakespeare in Hamlet. On the one

hand he cannot return to the primitive state in which all the motives for living flowed harmoniously in the same channel; he cannot divest himself of his illuminating reason; he cannot recede from his hardly acquired personal individuality. On the other hand, he can never expect, he can never even reasonably hope, that reason will ever hold in leash the emotions. It is clear that along neither path separately can the civilized man pursue his way in harmonious balance with himself.

LXVII

We are accustomed to suppose that a moral action is much easier to judge than a picture of Cézanne. We do not dream of bringing the same patient and attentive, as it were æsthetic, spirit to life as we bring to painting. Perhaps we are right, considering what poor bungling artists most of us are in living. For 'art

is easy, life is difficult,' as Liszt used to say. The reason, of course, is that the art of living differs from the external arts in that we cannot exclude the introduction of alien elements into its texture. Our art of living, when we achieve it, is of so high and fine a quality precisely because it so largely lies in harmoniously weaving into the texture elements that we have not ourselves chosen, or that, having chosen, we cannot throw aside. Yet it is the attitude of the spectators that helps to perpetuate that bungling.

LXVIII

THE moral reformer, eager to introduce the millennium here and now by the aid of the newest mechanical devices, is righteously indignant with anything so vague as an æsthetic morality. He must have definite rules and regulations, clear-cut laws and by-laws, with an arbitrary list of penalties attached, to be duly in-

flicted in this world or the next. The popular conception of Moses descending from the Sacred Mount with a brand-new table of commandments, which he declares have been delivered to him by God, though he is ready to smash them to pieces on the slightest provocation, furnishes a delightful image of the typical moral reformer of every age. It is, however, only in savage and barbarous stages of society, or among the uncultivated classes of civilization — especially in legislative assemblies — that the men of this type can find their faithful followers.

LXIX

The nobility of our lives resides less in our morality than in our intelligence and passion and organizatory force. Morality is but the grammar of life, and we must not make it our first demand of the great artist, whether he works in æsthetic creation or in social action.

LXX

It would be amazing, if it were not tragic, to watch the spectacle of Morality as it is played out on the scene of modern life. In reality nothing is simpler than the moral process of life. Whatever men see the majority of their fellows doing, that they call Morality: whatever they see done by the minority outside that compact majority — a minority which is of course partly in advance and partly behind the main body — that they call Immorality. This is a commonplace which has often been set forth. Yet how few there are who accept it simply and act in accordance with it! The mechanism is beautifully right, and yet they all want to stick a mischievous hand into it. If they belong to the compact majority they can never refrain from vituperating the small advance guard in front of them or the larger rearguard (back-guard they called it of old) behind them. And if they

belong to either of the minorities, their sneers and their contempt for the great compact majority are equally persistent. And yet it takes all of them to make a world. Their vituperation and their sneers are of less account than what wind blows. Whatever happens, there must always be a majority and there must always be a minority. Nothing can destroy Morality. Nor can anything destroy Immorality. All that happens is that the minority of one age becomes the majority of the next, as the old majority subsides into a minority.

LXXI

LIFE follows the same law as Art. It is the common fate of all creative work (and '*non merita nome di Creatore se non Iddio ed il Poeta*'). Whoso lives well, as whoso writes well, cannot fail to convey an alarming impression of novelty, precisely because he is in accurate personal ad-

justment to the facts of his own time. So he is counted immoral and criminal, as Nietzsche delighted to explain. Has not Nietzsche himself been counted, in his own playful phrase, an 'immoralist'? Yet the path of life that Nietzsche proposed to follow was just the same ancient, old-fashioned, in the true sense trivial path which all the world has trodden. Only his sensitive feet felt that path so keenly, with such a new grip of the toes on the asperities of it, that the mob cried: Why, this man cannot possibly be on our good old well-worn comfortable highway; he must have set off on some new path, no doubt a very bad and wicked path, where trespassers must be prosecuted. And it was just the same venerable path that all humanity has travelled, the path that Adam and Eve scuttled over, in hairy nakedness, through the jungle of the Garden of Eden!

LXXII

Moral maxims that were wholesome in feudal days are deadly now. We are in no danger of suffering from too much vitality, from too much energy in the explosive splendour of our social life. We possess, moreover, knowledge in plenty and self-restraint in plenty, even in excess, however wrongly they may sometimes be applied. It is passion, more passion and fuller, that we need. The moralist who bans passion is not of our time; his place these many years is with the dead. For we know what happens in a world when those who ban passion have triumphed. When Love is suppressed Hate takes its place. The least regulated orgies of Love grow innocent beside the orgies of Hate. When nations that might well worship one another cut one another's throats, when Cruelty and Self-righteousness and Lying and Injustice and all the Powers of Destruction

rule the human heart, the world is devastated, the fibre of the whole organism of society grows flaccid, and all the ideals of civilization are debased. If the world is not now sick of Hate, we may be sure it never will be; so whatever may happen to the world, let us remember that the individual is still left, to carry on the tasks of Love, to do good even in an evil world.

LXXIII

THE more one ponders over that attitude of comprehensive acceptance towards life, on its spiritual and physical sides alike, which marked the men of the Mediæval and Renaissance Ages, the more one realizes that its temporary suppression was inevitable. The men of those days were, one sees, themselves creating the instrument (what a marvellous intellectual instrument Scholasticism forged!) which was to analyse and destroy the

civilization they themselves lived in. Their fluid civilization held all the elements of life in active vital solution. They left hard, definite, clear-cut crystals for us to deal with, separate, immiscible, inharmonious substances. It was Progress, no doubt, as Progress exists in our world. The men of those days were nearer to Barbarism. They were also nearer to the Secret of Nature. Nowadays it is only among men of genius — a Whitman, a Wagner, a Rodin, a Verlaine — that the ancient secret has survived. Not indeed that it was universal even among Renaissance men, not even when they were men of genius. If it is true that, under the influence of Savonarola, Botticelli burnt his drawings, he was false to the spirit of his age, touched by the spirit of Progress before its time. Verlaine was nearer to the great secret when he wrote 'Sagesse' and, at the same time, 'Parallèlement.'

LXXIV

To possess by self-mastery the sources of love and hate is to transcend good and evil and so to possess the Overman's power of binding up the hearts that are broken by good and evil.

LXXV

TEMPTATION is an essential form of that Conflict which is of the essence of Life. Without the fire of perpetual Temptation no human spirit can ever be tempered and fortified. The zeal of the Moral Reformers who would sweep away all Temptation and place every young creature from the outset in a Temptation — free vacuum, even if it could be achieved (and the achievement would not only annihilate the whole environment, but eviscerate the human heart of its vital passions) would merely result in the creation of a race of useless weaklings. For Temptation is even more than

a stimulus to conflict. It is itself, in so far as it is related to Passion, the ferment of Life. To face and reject Temptation may be to fortify life. To face and accept Temptation may be to enrich life. He who can do neither is not fit to live.

LXXVI

To ask that one's own higher self should forgive one's own trespasses is the hardest prayer to answer that we can ever offer up. If we can breathe this prayer, and find it truly answered in a harmony of exalted comprehension and acceptance, then we have learnt what forgiveness is. There is no other way to learn forgiveness. We cannot forgive others in any comprehensible sense unless we have first learnt how to forgive ourselves. So this petition should read: 'And may we forgive those who trespass against us, As we forgive our own trespasses.'

LXXVII

THE very indefiniteness of the criterion of moral action, falsely supposed to be a disadvantage, is really the prime condition for effective moral action. The academic philosophers of ethics, had they possessed virility enough to enter the field of real life, would have realized — as we cannot expect the moral reformers, blinded by the smoke of their own fanaticism, to realize — that the slavery to rigid formulas which they preached was the death of all high moral responsibility. Life must always be a great adventure, with risks on every hand; a clear-sighted eye, a many-sided sympathy, a fine daring, an endless patience, are for ever necessary to all good living. With such qualities alone may the artist in life reach success; without them even the most devoted slave to formulas can only meet disaster. No reasonable moral being may draw breath

in the world without an open-eyed freedom of choice, and if the moral world is to be governed by laws, better to people it with automatic machines than with living men and women.

In our human world the precision of mechanism is for ever impossible. The indefiniteness of morality is a part of its necessary imperfection. There is not only room in morality for the high aspiration, the courageous decision, the tonic thrill of the muscles of the soul, but we have to admit also sacrifice and pain. The lesser good, our own or that of others, is merged in a larger good, and that cannot be without some rending of the heart. So all moral action, however in the end it may be justified by its harmony and balance, is in the making cruel, and in a sense even immoral. Therein lies the final justification of the æsthetic conception of morality. It opens a wider perspective and reveals loftier standpoints; it shows how the seeming loss is

part of an ultimate gain, so restoring that harmony and beauty which the unintelligent partisans of a hard and barren duty so often destroy for ever.

LXXVIII

Reason is on one side an integrating force, for it shows that the assumption of traditional morality — the identity of the individual's interests with the interests of the community — is soundly based. But it is also a disintegrating force. For if it reveals a general unity in the ends of living, it devises infinitely various and perplexingly distracting excuses for living. Before the active invasion of reason living had been an art, or at all events a discipline, highly conventionalized and even ritualistic, but the motive forces of living lay in life itself and had all the binding sanction of instincts; the penalty of every failure in living, it was felt, would be swiftly and

automatically experienced. To apply reason here was to introduce a powerful solvent into morals. Objectively it made morality clearer, but subjectively it destroyed the existing motives for morality; it deprived man, to use the fashionable phraseology of the present day, of a vital illusion.

LXXIX

If Perfection is that which is most beautiful and desirable to us, then it is something of which an essential part is Imperfection. . . . There are some people willing to admit that Perfection is a useless conception in relation to physical beauty, and yet unwilling to believe that it is equally useless in the moral sphere. Yet in the moral world also Imperfection is essential to beauty and desire. . . . The world is in perpetual oscillation. Let us be thankful for every inspiring revelation of a New Imperfection.

LXXX

To establish that there can be no single inflexible moral code for all individuals has been, and indeed remains, a difficult and delicate task; yet the more profoundly one considers it the more clearly it becomes visible that what once seemed a dead and rigid code of morality must more and more become a living act of casuistry.

LXXXI

In the sphere of morals we must often be content to wait until our activity is completed to appreciate its beauty or its ugliness. On the background of general æsthetic judgment we have to concentrate on the forces of creative artistic activity, whose work it is painfully to mould the clay of moral action, and forge its iron, long before the æsthetic criterion can be applied to the final product. The artist's work in life is full of struggle and

toil; it is only the spectator of morals who can assume the calm æsthetic attitude. Shaftesbury, indeed, evidently recognized this, but it was not enough to say, as he said, that we may prepare ourselves for moral action by study in literature. One may be willing to regard living as an art, and yet be of opinion that it is as unsatisfactory to learn the art of living in literature as to learn, let us say, the art of music in architecture.

LXXXII

Every great and vitally organized person is hostile to the rigid and narrow routine of social conventions, whether established by law or by opinion; they must ever be broken to suit his vital needs. Therefore the more we multiply these social routines, the more strands we weave into the social web, the more closely we draw them, by so much the more we are discouraging the production

of great and vitally organized persons, and by so much the more we are exposing society to destruction at the hands of such persons.

RELIGION

RELIGION

LXXXIII

It is only when we place God at the End, not at the Beginning, that the Universe fall into order. God is an Unutterable Sigh in the Human Heart, said the old German mystic, and therewith said the last word.

LXXXIV

The supreme expression of the religious consciousness lies always in an intuition of union with the world, under whatever abstract or concrete names the infinite not-self may be hidden. The perpetual annunciation of this union has ever been the chief gladness of life. It comes in the guise of a κάθαρσις of egoism, a complete renunciation of the limits of individuality — of all the desires and aims that seem to

converge in the single personality — and a joyous acceptance of what has generally seemed an immense external Will, now first dimly or clearly realized.

LXXXV

Religion is hidden by many a strange garment, but its heart is the same, and built firmly into the human structure. The old mystic spoke truly when he defined God as an unutterable sigh. Now and again we must draw a deep breath of relief — and that is religion. That no intellectual belief or opinion is necessarily bound up with religion, it is nowadays unnecessary to show.

LXXXVI

Whenever an impulse from the world strikes against the organism, and the resultant is not discomfort or pain, not even the muscular contraction of stren-

uous manhood, but a joyous expansion or aspiration of the whole soul — there is religion. It is the infinite for which we hunger, and we ride gladly on every little wave that promises to bear us towards it.

LXXXVII

It is strange: men seek to be, or to seem, atheists, agnostics, cynics, pessimists; at the core of all these things lurks religion. . . . The men who have most finely felt the pulse of the world, and have, in their turn, most effectively stirred its pulse, are religious men.

LXXXVIII

When there is not quite so much Mankind in the world, and what remains is of better quality, we may perhaps begin to see that a new task lies before Religion, and that all the patient study which men devoted to the Revelation that seemed to them held in the Text of the Bible is but

a feeble symbol of the Revelation held in the Text of Men and Women, of whom all the Bibles that ever were merely contain the excretions. It is exactly on that account that we cannot study Bibles too devoutly.

LXXXIX

THERE is, it has often seemed to me, a certain futility in all discussion of the relative claims of science and religion. This is a matter which, in the last resort, lies beyond the sphere of argument. It depends not only on a man's entire psychic equipment, brought with him at birth and never to be fundamentally changed, but it is the outcome of his own intimate experience during life. It cannot be profitably discussed because it is experiential.

XC

WHEN the man with hypertrophied religious instincts seeks to cultivate his

atrophied scientific instincts the results are scarcely satisfactory. Here, indeed, we are concerned with a phenomenon that is rarer than the reverse process. The reason may not be remote. The instinct of religion developed earlier in the history of the race than the instinct of science. The man who has found the massive satisfaction of his religious cravings is seldom at any stage conscious of scientific cravings; he is apt to feel that he already possesses the supreme knowledge. The religious doubters who vaguely feel that their faith is at variance with science are merely the creatures of creeds, the product of Churches; they are not the genuine mystics. The genuine mystics who have exercised their scientific instincts have generally found scope for such exercise within an enlarged theological scheme which they regarded as part of their religion. So it was that Saint Augustine found scope for his full and vivid, if capricious, intellectual im-

pulses; so also Aquinas, in whom there was doubtless less of the mystic and more of the scientist, found scope for the rational and orderly development of a keen intelligence which has made him an authority and even a pioneer for many who are absolutely indifferent to his theology.

XCI

If science and mysticism are alike based on fundamental natural instincts, appearing spontaneously all over the world; if, moreover, they naturally tend to be embodied in the same individual, in such a way that each impulse would seem to be dependent on the other for its full development, then there can be no ground for accepting any disharmony between them. The course of human evolution involves a division of labour, a specialization of science and of mysticism along special lines and in separate individuals. But a fundamental antagonism of the

two, it becomes evident, is not to be thought of; it is unthinkable, even absurd. If at some period in the course of civilization we seriously find that our science and our religion are antagonistic, then there must be something wrong either with our science or with our religion. Perhaps not seldom there may be something wrong with both.

XCII

RELIGION cannot live nobly without science or without morals. It is only by a strenuous devotion to science, by a perpetual reference to the moral structure of life, that religion — so made conscious of its nature and its limits — can be rendered healthful.

XCIII

RELIGION knows nothing of the scientific 'nature' or of the ethical 'man'; its impulse is from within and of free grace.

XCIV

By science we slake the thirst for knowledge; by religion we attain the bliss of contemplation.

XCV

We must always remember that 'religion' and 'Church,' though often confused, are far from being interchangeable terms. 'Religion' is a natural impulse, 'Church' is a social institution. The confusion is unfortunate.

XCVI

It is as undignified to think another man's philosophy as to wear another man's cast-off clothes. Only the poor in spirit or in purse can find any satisfaction in doing either. A philosophy or religion can only fit the man for whom it is made.

XCVII

We are beginning to realize that there are no metaphysical formulas to suit all men, but that every man must be the artist of his own philosophy. As we realize that it becomes easier than it was before to liberate ourselves from a dead metaphysics, and so to give free play alike to the religious and the scientific instinct. A man must not swallow more beliefs than he can digest; no man can absorb all the traditions of the past; what he fills himself with will only be a poison to work to his own auto-intoxication.

XCVIII

The burden of traditions, of conventions, of castes, has too often proved fatal alike to the manifestations of the religious impulse and the scientific impulse. It is unnecessary to point out how easily this happens in the case of the religious im-

pulse. It is only too familiar a fact how, when the impulse of religion first germinates in the young soul, the ghouls of the Churches rush out of their caverns, seize on the unhappy victim of the divine effluence, and proceed to assure him that his rapture is, not a natural manifestation, as free as the sunlight and as gracious as the unfolding of a rose, but the manifest sign that he has been branded by a supernatural force and fettered for ever to a dead theological creed. Too often he is thus caught by the bait of his own rapture; the hook is firmly fixed in his jaw and he is drawn whither his blind guides will; his wings droop and fall away; so far as the finer issues of life are concerned, he is done for and damned.

XCIX

After all, Pain and Death, in one form or another, sooner or later, are the lot of all of us, and so far as the race is con-

cerned, it may not be so grave a matter how or when they come. What the race lives by is its traditions, its power of embodying the finest emanations of its spirit and flesh in forms of undying beauty and aspiration which are never twice the same. These traditions it is which are the immortal joy and strength of Mankind, and in their destruction the race is far more hopelessly impoverished than in the destruction of any number of human beings. For it is by his traditions that Man is Man, and not by the number of meaningless superfluous millions whom he spawns over the earth.

C

The man who has never wrestled with his early faith, the faith that he was brought up with and that yet is not truly his own — for no faith is our own that we have not arduously won — has missed not only a moral but an intellectual dis-

cipline. The absence of that discipline may mark a man for life and render all his work in the world ineffective. He has missed a training in criticism, in analysis, in open-mindedness, in the resolutely impersonal treatment of personal problems, which no other training can compensate. He is, for the most part, condemned to live in a mental jungle where his arm will soon be too feeble to clear away the growths that enclose him and his eyes too weak to find the light.

CI

THAT is but a puny religion that is based on morals; on the other hand, the morals that rest on religion will sooner or later collapse with it in a common ruin. That has been too often seen. Religions change; every man is free to have his own or to have none. No man, scarcely even a Crusoe, is free to have no morals, and the ideal morality cannot widely vary for any two societies.

CII

MAN needs to deify not only his moments of moral subjection and rectitude, but his moments of orgy and revolt. He has attained the height of civilization, not along the one line only, but along both lines, and we cannot even be sure that the virtue line is the most important. Even the Puritan Milton ('a true poet and of the Devil's party without knowing it,' as Blake said) made Satan the real hero of his theological epic, while the austere Carducci addressed a famous ode to Satan as the creator of human civilization. And if you suspect that European culture may be only an eccentric aberration, then let us wander to the other side of the world, and we find, for instance, that the great Hawaiian goddess Kapo had a double life — now an angel of grace and beauty, now a demon of darkness and lust. Every profound vision of the world must recognize these two

equally essential aspects of Nature and of Man; every vital religion must embody both aspects in superb and ennobling symbols. A religion can no more afford to degrade its Devil than to degrade its God.

CIII

Our supreme business in life — not as we made it, but as it was made for us when the world began — is to carry and to pass on as we received it, or better, the sacred lamp of organic being that we bear within us. Science and morals are subservient to the reproductive activity; that is why they are so imperative. The rest is what we will, play, art, consolation — in one word, religion. If religion is not science or morals, it is the sum of the unfettered expansive impulses of our being. Life has been defined as, even physically and chemically, a tension. All our lives long we are struggling against that tension,

but we can truly escape from it only by escaping from life itself. Religion is the stretching forth of our hands towards the illimitable. It is an intuition of the final deliverance, a halfway house on the road to that City which we name mysteriously Death.

CIV

THE value of Prayer is not to be called in question. It is a spiritual weapon of incomparable value both for offence and defence. The most varied among the great figures of history have borne witness to the value of Prayer, from Jesus to Casanova. Yet the devout believer who preserves his mental equilibrium must surely be much exercised concerning the right use of such a weapon. A skilful combination seems here required of two contradictory faiths. I recall that in my early years I prayed with much fervour. No doubt my prayers availed me much. Yet if the things I prayed for with most

fervour had come to me I could have suffered no greater misfortune. We need the faith that our prayers will help us. We need also the faith that they require no answer. So that the devout man seems called upon to pray: 'O Lord! hear my prayer, but, O Lord, for God's sake don't grant it.'

PHILOSOPHY

PHILOSOPHY

CV

The world is essentially Absurd. We usually fail to see it for the good reason that we fail to see the world at all. We rarely have that Intuition of the Absurd, that power of seeing the world whole and apart from our personal ends which Bergson has in his mellifluous way explained Intuition to be. But it is a part of its Absurdity that there should be a little thread of Reason running through the world, and in so far as we discern that thread, and hold by it, we have attained the Intuition of the Absurd, we have seen the world with the eyes of God, we have lifted ourselves above the Herd in the Slime.

CVI

To be the serene spectator of the Absurdity of the world, to be at the same time

the strenuous worker in the Rationalization of the world — that is the function of the complete Man. But it remains a very difficult task, the supreme task in the Art of Living.

CVII

When the world first strikes upon our ignorant youthful vision it seems full of things that we call 'unnatural.' All our lives long we are slowly gaining a deeper insight into what is evidently the far from obvious truth that Nature is always natural.

CVIII

The problem which Vaihinger set out to solve was this: How comes it about that with consciously false ideas we yet reach conclusions that are in harmony with Nature and appeal to us as Truth? That we do so is obvious, especially in the 'exact' branches of science. In mathe-

matics it is notorious that we start from absurdities to reach a realm of law, and our whole conception of the nature of the world is based on a foundation which we believe to have no existence. For even the most sober scientific investigator in science, the most thorough-going Positivist, cannot dispense with fiction; he must at least make use of categories, and they are already fictions, analogical fictions, or labels, which give us the same pleasure as children receive when they are told the 'name' of a thing. Fiction is indeed an indispensable supplement to logic, or even a part of it; whether we are working inductively or deductively, both ways hang closely together with fiction; and axioms, though they seek to be primary verities, are more akin to fiction. If we had realized the nature of axioms, the doctrine of Einstein, which sweeps away axioms so familiar to us that they seem obvious truths, and substitutes others which seem absurd because they

are unfamiliar, might not have been so bewildering.

CIX

It may seem to some that the vision of the world which Man pursues on his course across the Universe becomes ever more impalpable and visionary. And so perhaps it may be. But even if that were an undesirable result, it would still be useless to fight against God. We are, after all, merely moulding the conceptions which a little later will become commonplaces and truisms. For really — while we must hold physics and metaphysics apart, for they cannot be blended — a metaphysics which is out of harmony with physics is negligible; it is nothing in the world. And it is our physical world that is becoming more impalpable and visionary. It is 'matter,' the very structure of the 'atom,' that is melting into a dream; and if it may seem that on

the spiritual side life tends to be moulding itself to the conception of Calderon as a dream, it is because the physical atom is pursuing that course.

CX

WHEN the gods, to ruin a man, first make him mad, they do it, almost invariably, by making him an optimist. One might hazard the assertion that the chief philosophic distinction between classic antiquity and modern civilization is the prevalence in the latter of a facile optimism, and the fact that of all ancient writers the most popular in modern times has been the complacently optimistic (or really hedonistic) Horace is hardly due to his technical virtuosity. He who would walk sanely amid the opposing perils in the path of life always needs a little optimism; he also needs a little pessimism.

CXI

We cannot remain consistent with the world save by growing inconsistent with our own past selves. The man who consistently — as he fondly supposes 'logically' — clings to an unchanging opinion is suspended from a hook which has ceased to exist.

CXII

One must win one's place in the spiritual world, painfully and alone. There is no other way of salvation. The Promised Land always lies on the other side of a wilderness.

CXIII

Civilization is the garment which man makes to clothe himself with. It is for each of us to help to put in a patch here, to sew on a button there, or to work in more embroidery. But the individual

himself, with his own personal organic passions, never becomes part of the garment; he only wears it. Not, indeed, that we are called upon to refuse to wear it. The person who can so refuse to follow the whole tradition of the race whence he springs is organically abnormal, not to say morbid. His fellows have a fair right to call him a lunatic or a criminal. The real question is whether we shall allow ourselves to be crushed to the earth, lame, impotent, and anæmic, by the mere garment of civilization, or whether we shall so strive to live that we wear it loosely and easily and athletically, recognizing that it is infinitely less precious than the humanity it clothes, still not without its beauty and its use.

CXIV

CHILDREN are more than murmuring streams, and women are more than fragrant flowers, and men are more than

walking trees. But on one side they are all part of the vision and music of Nature, not merely the creators of pictures and melodies, but even yet more fundamentally themselves the music and the vision. We cannot too often remember that not only is the art of man an art that Nature makes, but that Man himself is Nature. Accordingly as we cherish that faith, and seek to live by it, we vindicate our right to the Earth, and preserve our sane and vital relations to the Earth's life. The poets love to see human emotions in the procession of cosmic phenomena. But we have also to see the force of the sun and the dust of the earth in the dance of the blood through the veins of Man.

Civilization and Morals may seem to hold us apart from Nature. Yet the world has, even literally, been set in our hearts. We are of the Stuff of the Universe. In comparison with that fact Morals and Civilization sink into Nothingness.

CXV

EVERY man of genius sees the world at a different angle from his fellows, and there is his tragedy.

CXVI

EVERY man of genius is a stranger and a pilgrim on the earth, unlike other men, seeing everything as it were at a different angle, mirroring the world in his mind as in those concave or convex mirrors which elongate or abbreviate absurdly all who approach them.

CXVII

IN the degree in which I have been privileged to know the intimate secrets of hearts, I ever more realize how great a part is played in the lives of men and women by some little concealed germ of abnormality.

For the most part they are occupied in

the task of stifling and crushing those germs, treating them like weeds in their gardens, which may indeed be stifled and crushed but will always spring up again unless they are uprooted; and these plants can never be uprooted because they are planted deeply down, entwined with the texture of the organism.

So these people are engaged in a perpetual contest, a struggle of themselves against themselves, an everlasting effort to ensure that what they consider the higher self shall hold in check the lower self. Thereby they often attain strength of character. They are fortified for living. It can scarcely be said they are sweetened or enriched.

There is another and better way, even though more difficult and more perilous. Instead of trying to suppress the weeds that can never be killed, they may be cultivated into useful or beautiful flowers. The impulse that is selfish or perverse or harmful may in the end be so

transmuted as to bring forth fruits meet for service or for science or for art, no longer a poison for him in whose heart they grow and for those who surround him, but a precious herb for the healing of the nations. Thus in place of hard and loveless struggle and the perpetual production of a barren and virtuous soil, there is the prospect of harmony in fruitfulness, a life that has been enriched and sweetened by what had else been its bane.

For it is impossible to conceive any impulse in a human heart which cannot be transformed into Truth or into Beauty or into Love.

CXVIII

While we are socializing all those things of which all have equal common need, we are more and more tending to leave to the individual the control of those things which in our complex civilization

constitute individuality. We socialize what we call our physical life in order that we may attain greater freedom for what we call our spiritual life.

CXIX

In the moral world — so far as it is a world of great achievement — the tape measure is out of place. It is only the Immeasurable that counts. And Life is not only Immeasurable but magnificently inconsistent, even incomprehensible, to those who have not the clue to its Divine Maze.

CXX

The poets and prophets of one generation are engaged in moulding ideals which will be realized in the lives of a subsequent generation; in expressing their own most intimate emotions, as it has been truly said, they become the leaders in a long file of men and women.

CXXI

All progressive evolution may be regarded as a mechanism for concentrating an ever greater amount of energy in the production of ever fewer and ever more splendid individuals. Nature is perpetually striving to replace the crude ideal of quantity by the higher ideal of quality.

CXXII

We realize the world better if we imagine it, not as a Progress to Prim Perfection, but as the sustained upleaping of a Fountain, the pillar of a Glorious Flame.

CXXIII

Most of the mighty quarrels that have sent men to battle and the stake might have been appeased had each side recognized that both were right in their affirmations, both wrong in their denials.

CXXIV

He who would gain his life must be willing to lose it, and it is by being honest to oneself and to the facts, by applying courageously the measuring-rod of Truth, that in the end salvation is found.

CXXV

If a subject is not questionable it seems to me a waste of time to discuss it. The great facts of the world are not questionable; they are there for us to enjoy, or to suffer, in silence, not to talk about. Our best energies should be spent in attacking and settling questionable things that so we may enlarge the sphere of the unquestionable — the sphere of real life — and be ready to meet new questions as they arise. It is only by dealing with the questionable aspects of the world that criticism of life can ever have any saving virtue for us. It is waste of life to use literature for pawing over the unques-

tionable. Even a healthy dog, having once ascertained the essential virtue of a bone, contentedly eats it, or buries it.

CXXVI

For as pain is entwined as an essential element in the perfect achievement of that which seems naturally the most pleasurable of the arts, so it is with the whole art of living, of which dancing is the supreme symbol. There is no separating Pain and Pleasure without making the first meaningless for all vital ends and the second turn to ashes. To exalt pleasure is to exalt pain; and we cannot understand the meaning of pain unless we understand the place of pleasure in the art of life. In England, James Hinton sought to make that clear, equally against those who failed to see that pain is as necessary morally as it undoubtedly is biologically, and against those who would puritanically refuse to accept the morality of pleasure. It is no doubt im-

portant to resist pain, but it is also important that pain should be there to resist. Even when we look at the matter no longer subjectively but objectively, we must accept pain in any sound æsthetic or metaphysical picture of the world.

CXXVII

Every man who has reached the stage of development in which he can truly experience the joy of the philosophic emotion will construct his own philosophy. A philosophy is the house of the mind, and no two philosophies can be alike because no two minds are alike. But the emotion is the same, the emotion of expansive joy in a house not built with hands, in which the soul has made for herself a large and harmonious dwelling.

CXXVIII

We cannot count too precious in any age those who sweep away outworn tradi-

tions, effete routines, the burden of unnecessary duties and superfluous luxuries and useless moralities, too heavy to be borne. We rebel against these rebels, even shudder at their sacrilegious daring. But, after all, they are a part of life, an absolutely necessary part of it. For life is a breaking-down as well as a building-up. Destruction as well as Construction goes to the Metabolism of Society.

CXXIX

Men are always apt to bow down before the superior might of their ancestors. It has been so always and everywhere. Even the author of the once well-known Book of Genesis believed that 'there were giants on the earth in those days,' the mighty men which were of old, the men of renown; and still to-day among ourselves no plaint is more common than that concerning the physical degeneracy of modern men as compared with our

ancestors of a few centuries ago. Now and then, indeed, there comes along a man of science, like Professor Parsons, who has measured the bones from the remains of the ancestors we still see piled up in the crypt at Hythe, and finds that — however fine the occasional exceptions — the average height of those men and women was decidedly less than that of their present-day descendants. Fortunately for the vitality of tradition, we cherish a wholesome distrust of science. And so it is with our average literary stature. The academic critic regards himself as the special depository of the accepted tradition, and far be it from him to condescend to any mere scientific inquiry into the actual facts. He half awakens from slumber to murmur the expected denunciation of his own time, and therewith returns to slumber. He usually seems unaware that even three centuries ago, in the finest period of English prose, Swift, certainly himself a su-

preme master, was already lamenting 'the corruption of our style.'

CXXX

THERE are always some who passionately seek to hold fast to the past; there are always others who passionately seek to snatch at what they imagine to be the future. But the wise man, standing midway between both parties and sympathizing with each, knows that we are ever in the stage of transition. The present is in every age merely the shifting point at which past and future meet, and we can have no quarrel with either. There can be no world without traditions; neither can there be any life without movement. As Heracleitus knew at the outset of modern philosophy, we cannot bathe twice in the same stream, though, as we know to-day, the stream still flows in an unending circle. There is never a moment when the new dawn is not break-

ing over the earth, and never a moment when the sunset ceases to die. It is well to greet serenely even the first glimmer of the dawn when we see it, not hastening towards it with undue speed, nor leaving the sunset without gratitude for the dying light that once was dawn.

In the moral world we are ourselves the light-bearers, and the cosmic process is in us made flesh. For a brief space it is granted to us, if we will, to enlighten the darkness that surrounds our path. As in the ancient torch-race, which seemed to Lucretius to be the symbol of all life, we press forward, torch in hand, along the course. Soon from behind comes the runner who will outpace us. All our skill lies in giving into his hand the living torch, bright and unflickering, as we ourselves disappear in the darkness.

CXXXI

To abase the mighty and exalt the humble seems to man the divinest of preroga-

tives, for it is that which he himself exercises in his moments of finest inspiration. To find a new vision of the world, a new path to truth, is the instinct of the artist or the thinker. He changes the whole system of our organized perceptions. That is why he seems to us at first an incarnate paradox, a scoffer at our most sacred verities, making mountains of our mole-hills and counting as mere mole-hills our everlasting mountains, always keeping time to a music that clashes with ours, at our hilarity *tristis, in tristitia hilaris.*

CXXXII

A MARVELLOUS thing how pliant the human animal is to work! Certainly it is no Gospel of Work that the world needs. It has ever been the great concern of the lawgivers of mankind, not to ordain work, but, as we see so interestingly in the Mosaic Codes, to enjoin holidays from work.

CXXXIII

EVERY one, for some brief period in early life, should be thrown on his own resources in the solitudes of Nature, to enter into harmonious relations with himself, and to realize the full scope of self-reliance. For the man or woman to whom this experience has never been given, the world must hold many needless mysteries and not a few needless miseries.

CXXXIV

THERE are not only far too many people in the world, there are far too many things. Prodigality is indeed the note of Nature. And rightly so. But Economy is the note of Man. Rightly also. For Nature has infinite lives to play with. Man has only one life.

CXXXV

IF a man cannot sing as he carries his cross he had better drop it.

CXXXVI

We cannot but follow the piper that knows how to play, even to our own destruction. There may be much that is objectionable about Man. But he has that engaging trait. And the world will end when he has lost it.

CXXXVII

Great is the power of words. Give us this day our daily catchword, the public prays, and our Governments are in that kind of rationing indeed experts. Bread and circuses they gave the Roman public; they give the British the Newspaper Press, and it seems to be equally satisfying at a smaller cost. So it is that the faith in Progress is justified.

CXXXVIII

Man is a gregarious animal, the creature of his small flock, inimical, at best indif-

ferent, to all other flocks. If Nature needs a truly sympathetic international animal, Nature must wipe out Man and produce another species.

CXXXIX

Illusion and Reality are both part of Life, each supporting the other, and we cannot live sanely and completely unless we are loyal to both, not only, on the one hand, rendering unto God the things that be God's, but in the world of reality strenuously rendering unto Cæsar the things that be Cæsar's, dethronement and degradation when that seems meet.

CXL

Every spiritual darkness, they say, is darkest before dawn. It is sad, no doubt, that we of the last two centuries should, beyond all men, have lived in the age in which, above or below all others, the

world could not be seen for what it is, and that all our literature and our art, and almost our science, is so choked and disguised in artificial and hypocritical garments that one sometimes wonders whether in future times anyone will ever think it worth looking at. It may seem hard. But what finer stimulus could there be to our courage? One sometimes feels that the substitution of the minor martyrdoms of modern times for the major martyrdoms of older days has not been altogether for the good of humanity. Of old it was from the flames that went up from the bodies of real martyrs burnt at the stake that the dawn was first most clearly seen in the sky.

CXLI

The world, if we like to view it so, is fundamentally a very ugly place. If you like (of course you need not like) it is fundamentally — physically, metaphysi-

cally, spiritually, morally, socially, individually — as bad as possible. But there is this about it. By facing this ugly world, by ranging wide enough in it, afar, and above, and below — in Nature or in one's fellows or in oneself — one can find beauty. Slowly, patiently, with the exercise of much skill, one can divine beauty in it, one can reveal beauty, one can transmute it into beauty, one can even create beauty. The number of points at which one has been able to do this is the measure of one's success in living.

CXLII

Civilization is Man's hopeless effort to cover up and conceal those traits of himself which he regards as specially animal-like.

CXLIII

Every act of civilization, I read, is an act of rebellion against Nature. It is cu-

rious how this notion persists. Even exquisitely acute people, like Baudelaire, have cherished it. One need not proceed to analyse the varying ways in which men have used the word 'Nature,' for it has been done before. Yet in so far as every act of civilization is an act of rebellion against Nature, so is every act of Nature an act of rebellion against the Nature that went before, even from the very beginning of life. For all life is a tension of forces, an elaborately contrived device for holding natural tendencies in suspense, an interference with an existing order. Every chemical combination may be said to be a resistance to Nature, an attempt to establish an 'unnatural' stability which Nature is ever seeking to destroy, and this process is at play among all the phenomena of life. In the same way Nature created the ruminants which the carnivores slay, and Man slays them both; it is all equally 'unnatural.' Man clothes himself with

skins and adorns himself with feathers that were first the clothing and the adornment of other creatures. It is all unnatural or all natural. The difference is that there the method was slowly and unconsciously developed, here swiftly and consciously. But why in that form more natural than in this?

We may say, if we like, that Unnature came into the world at the outset and has continued throughout. Or we may say, if we like, that it is all Nature. But there is no intermediate position. No doubt, for a spirit that lived in the sun or the moon, this fantastic planet, Earth, would seem radically Unnature, the sea itself, the womb of all life, would not be natural; nothing could be less natural than the birds in the air or the beasts on the land or the fishes in the sea, all occupied with their variegated devices to elude Nature as known in the sun or the moon. For my own part, I find it all Nature, alive with that adorable beauty which — re-

bel against it in our foolish moments as we may — Nature must in the end always hold for us. So that even before the wildest aberrations of the human imagination I still find myself of Shakespeare's mind, and murmur before every art that changes Nature, 'The art itself is Nature.'

CXLIV

For ecstasy and anguish are the life-blood of the world. They are the Sacrament, of Truth or of Beauty or of Love, in which the two elements are mingled. It is because one has drunk deep, if but once only, of that mingled cup that at last, and only at last, one becomes the Master of Life and the Master of Death, unable in the end even to see them apart, or to find any blemish in the face of either. So, unmoved in spirit, we can depart from Life to Death, satisfied and serene, swathed in the benediction of 'the Peace of God which passeth all un-

derstanding,' as in old days they called it.

CXLV

Life is a perpetual risk and danger, the perpetual toss of a die which can never be calculated, a perpetual challenge to high adventure. But it is only in Art that the solution of Life's problems can be found. Life is always immoral and unjust. It is Art alone which, rising above the categories of Morality, justifies the pains and griefs of Life by demonstrating their representative character and emphasizing their spectacular value, thus redeeming the Pain of Life by Beauty.

CXLVI

The later Francis survived; the early Francis is forgotten. But we may be assured that there would have been no Francis the saint if there had not been Francis the sinner. That grace and ela-

tion, the tender humanity and infinite delight in natural things, even the profound contempt for luxury and superfluity, were not learnt in any of the saint's beloved Umbrian cells; they were the final outcome of a beautifully free and excessive life acting on an exquisitely fine-strung organism. Rarely has any follower of Francis attained in any measure to his level of exalted freedom, joy, and simplicity in saintliness. It was not alone that they could not possess his organism, but they had not lived his life.

CXLVII

It is more passion and ever more that we need if we are to undo the work of Hate, if we are to add to the gaiety and splendour of life, to the sum of human achievement, to the aspiration of human ecstasy. The things that fill men and women with beauty and exhilaration, and spur them to actions beyond themselves, are the

things that are now needed. The entire intrinsic purification of the soul, it was held by the great Spanish Jesuit theologian Suarez, takes place at the moment when, provided the soul is of good disposition, it sees God; he meant after death, but for us the saying is symbolic of the living truth. It is only in the passion of facing the naked beauty of the world and its naked truth that we can win intrinsic purity. Not all, indeed, who look upon the face of God can live. It is not well that they should live. It is only the metals that can be welded in the fire of passion to finer services that the world needs. It would be well that the rest should be lost in those flames. That indeed were a world fit to perish wherein the moralist had set up the ignoble maxim: Safety first.

CXLVIII

We make our own world; when we have made it awry we can remake it, approxi-

mately truer, though it cannot be absolutely true to the facts. It will never be finally made; we are always stretching forth to larger and better fictions which answer more truly to our growing knowledge and experience. Even when we walk, it is only by a series of regulated errors, Vaihinger well points out, a perpetual succession of falls to one side and the other side. Our whole progress through life is of the same nature, all thinking is a regulated error. For we cannot, as Vaihinger insists, choose our errors at random or in accordance with what happens to please us; such fictions are only too likely to turn into deadening dogmas: the old *vis dormitiva* is the type of them, mere husks that are of no vital use and help us not at all. There are good fictions and bad fictions, just as there are good poets and bad poets. It is in the choice and regulation of our errors, in our readiness to accept ever closer approximations to the unattainable reality,

that we think rightly and live rightly. We triumph in so far as we succeed in that regulation. 'A lost battle,' Foch, quoting De Maistre, lays down in his 'Principes de Guerre,' 'is a battle one thinks one has lost'; the battle is won by the fiction that is won. It is so also in the battle of life, in the whole art of living. Freud regards dreaming as fiction that helps us to sleep; thinking we may regard as fiction that helps us to live. Man lives by imagination.

CXLIX

In any country in any age the men who arise and walk, strongly and fearlessly, in accordance with the inspirations of their own souls, can be but a very small minority. The majority, always and everywhere, are lame and weak, timid and conventional. Unamuno is grieved because the youth of Madrid are suffering from *ideophobia*, the horror of ideas;

but it is a disease by no means confined to Madrid; in London, for instance, it is endemic. National indolence or social parasitism, which Spanish reformers seek to battle with to-day, is ever present in some form, a more respectable or a less respectable form; in its more respectable Spanish form it finds refuge in officialdom, in its less respectable forms it inspired the picaresque literature which is among the achievements of Spain's golden age. It is not the existence of such an element in the national life which is the main concern — for not every one can be a Vasco da Gama or a Hernan Cortes, a Cervantes or a Calderon, a Velasquez or a Goya — but the freedom and vigour with which the elect few can live and move in the national life and dominate its currents. That is never an easy task, even for the most indomitable and audacious persons, even in the ages most favourable to their achievements.

CL

BEAUTY, when the vision is purged to see through the outer vesture, is Truth, and when we can pierce to the deepest core of it is found to be Love. This is a goddess whom I have worshipped sometimes in the unlikeliest places, perhaps even where none else saw her, and she has given wine to my brain, and oil to my heart, and wings to my feet over the stoniest path. No doubt the herd will trample down my shrine some day, yet still worshipping Beauty, even without knowing it. But I shall no longer be there.

EPITAPH: *If I were ambitious, I would desire no finer epitaph than that it should be said of me, He has added a little to the sweetness of the world, and a little to its light. The two are indeed inseparable. Without a clear-eyed vision there can be no sweetness that is worth while, and without sweetness there can be no true revelation of light.*

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